Ocean Harvesters: Resource Extraction
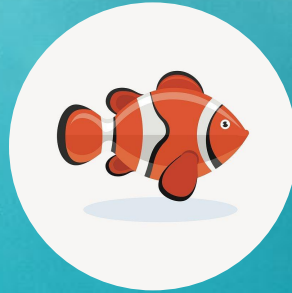
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Mediating Ocean Futures
Group 5
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Meet the Team

Kim Nguyen

Undergraduate
student researcher

Michael Ortega

Undergraduate
student researcher

Carrina Tran

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Purpose

Ocean Harvesters is a serious role-playing game that focuses on illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, deep-sea mining, and marine transportation. Resource extraction from the oceans means impacts on biodiversity and inequitable distribution among communities. Today, there is a lack of regulatory frameworks and large uncertainties regarding the stewardship of our oceans. This game will aim to encourage students at a college level to seek out local resources to learn more about and take action regarding these systems. This game will represent these topics in different global regions.

Narrative

As the new intern reporter for your local newspaper, you have been tasked with gathering information on a topic that the senior journalists have long been avoiding: oceanic resource extraction. Conflicting interests, political agendas, and fear of lost sponsors have resulted in untold stories and silenced voices at the price of the communities who need the help the most.

In Ocean Harvesters, you and your research team explore our oceans on a journey to expose the effects of IUU fishing, deep-sea mining, and marine transportation on coastal communities. Interact with unique characters from various regions across the globe and listen to their first-hand accounts. As you look for answers, more questions seem to bubble up like the turbulent waters you navigate through.

What are the options for equitable resource distribution? How can your reporting change resource management and regulations? What can you do to foster stewardship for our waters? What role do you, the player, have in mediating ocean futures?

Storyboard Mapping

Image courtesy of: OSRS Wiki

Open-world exploration map
(new regions every patch).

Socio-economic
impacts told through
interactions with NPCs.

Environmental impacts
told through interactions
with surroundings.

Interactable characters
(NPCs) based on real
communities and user
stories.

Free to play, PC-friendly
platform for accessibility
in classroom settings.

-Camille Phien-
My relief was supposed to be here hours ago! I'm supposed to be enjoying a
nice hot bath right about now.

Do you need a suit of light armor? It's cool and it doesn't chafe!

Store (Tailor)
Goodbye.

Mute Dialogue
Unmute Dialogue

Image courtesy of: ESOUI Database

First person POV fosters personal
connection to ageless,
gender-neutral "Traveler" and
increases impact of overarching
message.

Comparable Media Examples

Pirate Fishing (Altera Studios, 2012)

- Interactive, investigative journalism
  - Stewardship-based narrative

Beyond Blue (E-Line Media, 2020)

- Third person POV open world exploration
- Environmental-focused

NOAA Planet Stewards

- Open access materials for educators
  - Ocean, climate literacy guides
- Webinars, book clubs, workshops

Campaign Objectives

The overall objective of the game is to help spread awareness on the issues regarding Resources Extraction. Participants get to follow along our narrative as we tell stories of resource extraction through IUU Fishing, Deep Sea Mining and Marine Transportation.
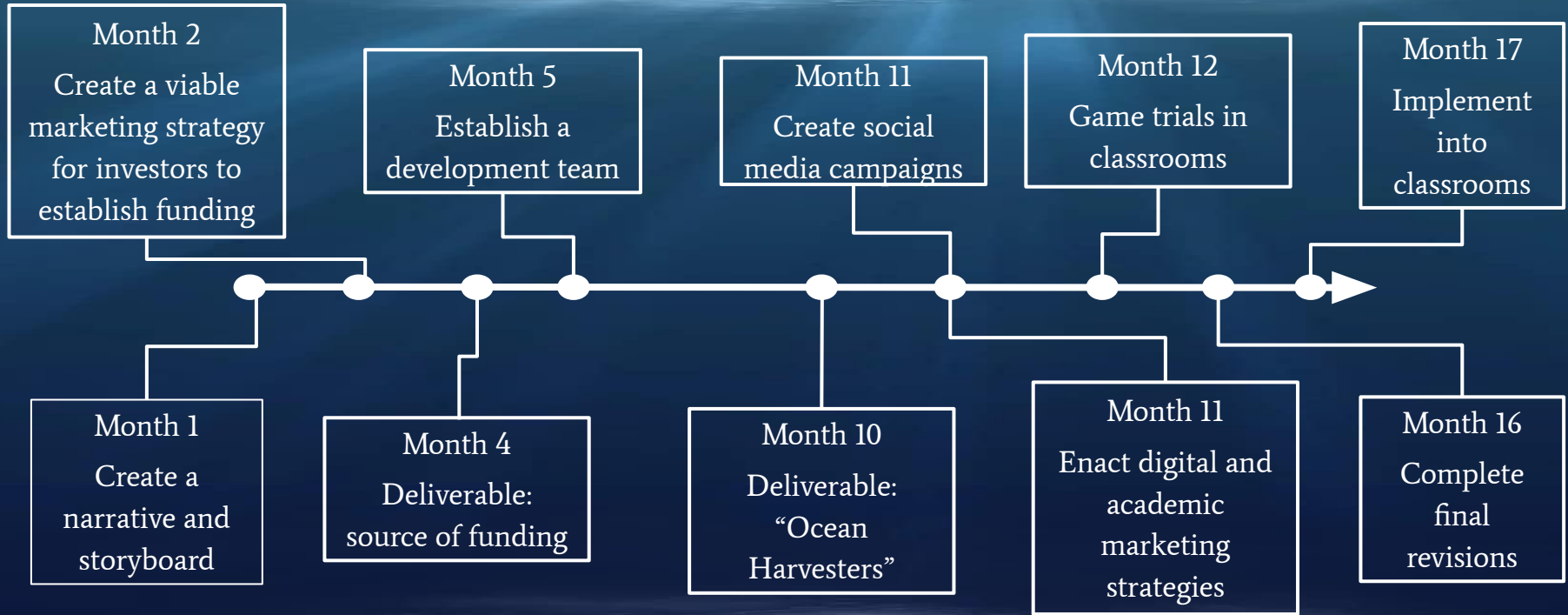
Advertising

Our reason for advertising our game in such a way is to tell the story of resource extraction in a different and interactive way. Along with our marketing strategy of using Instagram, TikTok, Website and Academic Conferences/Events, the story we want to tell, and show can be viewed and played as to bring awareness to Resource Extraction.

Improvements and Adjustments

As this would be our first campaign this would be a great way to measure and adjust anything within the campaign and for future campaigns and projects. Also for the game itself for improvements, questions and feedback for participants .

Timeline

Month 2
Create a viable marketing strategy for investors to establish funding

Month 5
Establish a development team

Month 11
Create social media campaigns

Month 12
Game trials in classrooms

Month 17
Implement into classrooms

Month 1
Create a narrative and storyboard

Month 4
Deliverable: source of funding

Month 10
Deliverable: "Ocean Harvesters"

Month 11
Enact digital and academic marketing strategies

Month 16
Complete final revisions

Marketing Strategies

Digital Social Media:

Instagram: catering to wider audiences with a minimum amount of 3 posts of gameplay content to encourage initial engagement.

Tiktok: shorter content giving insight into the development process and the game itself with open collaboration from community/users.

Academic/Educational:

Conferences: creating an informational presentation about the game and its context to network with working professionals within the field and encourage use within classrooms.

Tabling Events: to encourage feedback, engagement, and collaboration with multiple audiences and present a hands-on sample of the game.

Website:

Incorporating interactive browsing through creative web design to provide information to public audiences, promote the game, and give insight into the ongoing developments. This will also be used as a resource for providing context for multidisciplinary collaboration and a tool to connect with the development team.

Budgeting

Building an educational game requires a collaborative effort from a multidisciplinary team. With the proper amount of funding, we would like to build a team of 1-2 game developers, 2-3 researchers for the game's content, and 1 marketing strategist for our digital media campaigns.

Source: Grant Funding (Beyond the Lab Humanities Lab Grant and philanthropic funding) and donations through our website

What we need to invest in:

- Onboarding game developers (students: $4,000 - $5,000 or professionals: $12,000 - $20,000)
    - Current students with relevant experience in computer programming and an interest in online gaming
    - 5-6 months timeline of work depending on number of interested people

- Online platform
    - Game Maker Studio, Unity, Godot, or another platform that aligns with our developers' experience
    - Monetary investment varies depending on the game platform being used (Free - 2000$)
    - Possible expenses for website development/ownership ($100 - $400)

- Networking and academic marketing ($4,000 - $6,000)
    - Paying for travel to conferences and tabling events (Team of 3 - 4 people)
    - Supplies to promote "Ocean Harvesters" at these events

Key Performance Indicators

The main focus of the campaign centers on the game, so the key indicators will gauge its performance with the intended audience. They will offer insights into whether the game functions effectively or requires adjustments. These key indicators provide a comprehensive overview of the both the game and our campaign.

- Players - how many participants and in what context are they completing the game?
    - 500 participants within the first 2 months and then 1,000 participants in 4 months
- Completion - how many participants completed the game
    - Built in code to track player retention time
    - 70-80% player completion by first 4 months
- Participants Enjoyment - how did the feel after completing the game/task?
    - Participant survey following gameplay
- Engagement with Collaborators - maintaining relationships and building on feedback
    - Number of collaborators and ongoing engagement efforts following 4 months

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